

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, December 4, 1885, with transcript

Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel (Hubbard) Bell. L Mansion House, Vineyard Haven, Friday morning, December 4th, 1885. Mrs. A. G. Bell, 1500 R. I. Ave., Washington, D. C.
Dear little wife:

This is a clear bright frosty morning — cold and invigorating. I have been out walking for two hours nearly and have now come back all in a glow to set to work on the old records. If it continues fine will go for another walk about three o'clock.

In New York I bought an empty glass vial which I now keep with me as a sort of friend and guide! I fill it every night and watch it every morning. It has already made revelations to me of the necessity of attending to Doctor's orders — I never before saw such a condition of affairs — and feel quite troubled.

When I have had a sufficient amount of diet and exercise here I will look in on Dr. Kinnicut on my way home. I thought of consulting him when I was in New York but I had a guilty conscience and knew I had not been following directions, etc.

In the meantime I am watching the effect of conscientious diet and exercise — to see whether they really do produce an improvement or not. I feel quite well and bright this morning but the indications were worse than ever this morning. But enough of self.

You are quite wrong — I did not intend you to read anything between the lines of my N. Y. letter about Miss Radcliffe. What a suspicious old thing my little wife is to be sure! Thieves, burglars 2 and ghosts too — come into her mind when I am away.

Quite flattering to me. I did not feel before that I was such an important personage in the house and now — if I go away — the whole household is disturbed by that miserable

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little yelping animal that so constantly jars my nerves. I have learned by experience to take no heed of her barking — she does not yet recognize her friends from her enemies. Still I have never liked to check her noise for it is a safeguard to have her around and her indiscriminate barking may be of use to you if you observe it. It means “Some one is around.” But I am afraid she barks so much that you have ceased to take notice. She even greets me with a growl and yelp when I go down to bed — but this rarely seems to disturb you. Now the two dogs are just what you want. Take them both to bed and let them lie down where you can feel them if they bark.

“Bow-wow” goes Bec — but staid old Yo keeps curled up and does not so much as move her tail all night — don't be disturbed — It's only Nellie or Miss Palmer or Elsie or Daisy.

But if Yo joins in you may suspect a strange step. She will not bark by herself except for an unusual noise — although sometimes she joins in a chorus with Bec.

Take care of my little dog for me won't you. Let her have a basket somewhere filled with hay. She will want it soon. By the bye — What is the difference between Yoland and yourself? Give it up? Why — when you go out Yo remains behind! Twig? (You — u = Yo!) That's not quite right. I'm out of practice in 3 punning. Could make a good one of it if I took time.

And now dear Mabel to take care of yourself won't you? Don't be frightened or nervous. You don't say anything about Daisy's cold. Keep that door shut near her head and hang curtains round her bed. Won't you ask both Elsie and Daisy to write to me. Love to both and ever so much to yourself.

I really do feel troubled about your father. Please let me know how he is. I love him very much and wish he only knew it.

Love to all.

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Your affectionate husband, Alec.